

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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NAME: McLean County Courthouse

LOCATION: 5th Avenue, bounded northwest by 7th St. and SE by 8th St, Washburn,
North Dakota 38, Mclean county 055

OWNER: Mclean County, Washburn, ND

VBD (LEGAL): Block 8 of Riverview Addition to the Town of Washburn

ACREAGE: 2.065 Acres

UTM: Zone 14, Easting = 346800, Northing = 5239255; Washburn, N. Dak. Quad.

DESCRIPTION: The McLean County Courthouse complex consists in two contributing buildings (a brick courthouse with a 1966 addition and the brick sheriff's residence-jail with a 1977 addition) and several non-contributing features.

The brick courthouse arrived at its present configuration in three phases. In 1908 the original portion was constructed south and west of the existing sheriff's residence. The building rose two stories from a full basement and four dormers punctured its hipped roof. The edifice possessed arched and sandstone-lintel windows, a cutstone base, and visible soffit brackets. In 1917 a mirror-image addition was placed at the building's east, both of which were separated by a large tower. A final steel-frame and colored-panel annex was added to the west side of the brick courthouse.

The sheriff's residence and jail are situated behind what is now the courthouse front. When the courthouse was constructed in 1908 the entrances of the two building faced each other.

The sheriff's residence-jail is a hipped roof structure which contributes to the site. Its features parallel many adopted in the 1908 courthouse design: cut stone base, limestone or brick courses which separate the basement, main, and upper floors, limestone sills, and a hipped roof. The building also possesses distinguishing features: a decorative parapet highlighted by cuvelinear stone coping, and a wood columned porch on the south side which was later replaced by an enclosed wood frame entryway. A brick extension was added to the east side of the jail in 1977.

Also on site are two non-contributing buildings: a 18' x 12' cooling system enclosure (1982) and a sheet metal 8' x 10' storage shed (late 1970's), neither of which contribute to the theme of local government or architecture. The site also contains a piece of farm machinery--now a memorial, a propane gas tank for the residence, a garden, clothesline, and wooden partitions sheltering a recreation space near the sheriff's residence.

SIGNIFICANCE: Date: 1905, 1908, 1917

Architect: (Jail) Pauley Jail Bldg Co.
(Courthouse) Hancock Bros.

Contractor: (Jail) A.O. Reed 1905
(Courthouse) T. F. Powers 1908
Andrew Person 1917

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The courthouse and sheriff's residence-jail are significant in the history of McLean County administration for having housed the court and protecting valuable county records. A complex series of buildings have been used for county business in Washburn. Newspaper accounts, commissioners' journals, and local histories do not clearly state the evolution of courthouse buildings in Washburn after 1900. In June of 1905 a wood-frame courthouse burned and commissioners quickly erected a new building for the purpose on the old site downtown. At the same time advertisements for bids were posted for construction of a large jail and sheriff's residence on a new site up hill from the replacement courthouse. Apparently the replacement wood-frame courthouse offered a home to county offices until 1917 when the present courthouse was completed.

In 1908 commissioners let bids for a second building on the sheriff's residence-jail site from plans produced by the Hancock Brothers, a Fargo, North Dakota architectural firm. News stories reported the commissioners' statement that the structure was a county office building, not a courthouse. In 1917 the full form of the historic courthouse was realized from Hancock Brothers' plans. At this time the courts relocated to upper floors in the new (east) side of the building. The two contributing buildings then, show quite well architecturally the historic expansion of county administration over time and the consequential need for extra space.

The two contributing buildings, too, are significant for communicating architectural tastes overtime. A general coherence of architectural feeling and consistency of design occurs within the historic portions of the two contributing buildings. Later additions, however, are attached with less regard for the original design. For instance the 1917 addition is indistinguishable from the original 1908 county building. Without photographic or written evidence. The 1966 annex, on the other hand, is clearly not part of the historic structure. Its lack of visual integration suggests a decline in the value placed upon complete consistency of design for additions. The annex does attempt to be compatible in its deferent size, use of similarly colored brick, and stone course at the basement level which continues that course from the historic building.

The sheriff's residence-jail and courthouse are architecturally significant on the local level as outstanding brick constructions which exhibit elements of academic styles. A windshield survey of Washburn shows that most of the town's buildings contemporary with the courthouse show far fewer distinctive stylistic features. The older buildings of the downtown are small brick structures or have been covered by modern materials neither of which show high-style designs. Only a few residences from the period of significance are left which bear signs of architectural influence. The courthouse and related structures form an outstanding complex in the local architectural context. The courthouse itself ranks high among others in the state from a period roughly 1895-1920, where classical and eclectic revival styles were popular.

The large site does not have a great deal of integrity of setting, but retains a good deal of the integrity of its historic feeling from the numerous large evergreen trees which obscure the 1966 annex and small non-contributing sheds added in 1979 and 1981. The 1982 window and front door replacements have metal frames. The greatest loss of

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material from the site was the 1985 demolition of a two-stall stable dating from the early 1900's at the northeast corner of the site.

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Williams, Mary Anne Barnes

Pioneer Days of Washburn, N. Dak. and Vicinity, (Washburn, N.D.: Washburn Leader, 1936).